

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- August 14, 2023

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, agendas for the following meeting were delivered to all members of Council, County Attorney Richard Ness, Lower Savannah COG, *The Bamberg Leader*, *The Times and Democrat*, Southern Carolina Regional Alliance, Bamberg County Library, Bamberg County Website and Bamberg County Courthouse Annex.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 6:00 p.m., August 14, 2023 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Phil Myers, Jr., Larry Haynes, Spencer Donaldson and Clint Carter (*arrived 6:25 p.m.*). **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, Richard Ness, T.M. Thomas, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Donald Kirby, Kenneth Bamberg, Josh Urwick, Mable Wright, Alisha Moore, William Molnar and Miriam Beard.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Phil Myers, followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the minutes from the July 10, 2023 meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the agenda was approved as submitted.

Mr. Ryan Thorne, CEO of Thorne Ambulance Service was in attendance to enlighten all that were present of the new EMS services located here in Bamberg County. Thorne Ambulance Service replaced MedShore Ambulance as of Wednesday, August 9th. Countless energy is being used toward the ability to interconnect and speak directly with other public safety departments (law enforcement, fire departments, etc.) and across county lines and making sure that the communication channels open for joint aid as those occasions become accessible and necessary to meet the needs of the community. Thorne's radio communications vendor will be in Bamberg County soon and they have assured them that they will remain onsite until communications equipment is functioning at 100 percent just as it should be. There will be an ambulance stationed in Bamberg and Denmark. Automatic vehicle locating systems will be used to ensure the unit responds to an emergency. Different ways are being looked at to work with fire service and incorporate some of their medical providers into their response plans when they are available to be on scene. After some additional comments, Mr. Thorne thanked the council for allowing them the opportunity to serve Bamberg County and its citizens.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the commission of its new animal control officer, Virginia Mitchell, who will enroll in the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy class for class 3 basic officer training by the end of August. The oath of office will be administered on August 28, 2023.

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COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Alliance - Monthly Report

Southern Carolina Alliance Project Manager Josh Urwick reported that Shelby Broomfield, the regional training coordinator at the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, has been accompanying on industry visits. Right now, they are trying to figure out workforce needs in the county and the region as a whole. The question was asked why has there been difficulty filling the existing speculative building at the CrossRhodes park. The answer was given that the building is 10,000 feet smaller than what industries are looking for. Council accepted this report as information.

Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report

County Treasurer Alice Johnson gave the June financial report, stating they had \$871,518.20 in income and expenditures of \$1,144,778.50, leaving a negative balance of \$273,260.30. When the positive bank balance at the end of May (\$244,509.11) was added, the county's regular account stood at a negative \$28,751.19. Treasurer Johnson's report was received as information.

Bamberg County Budget - Monthly Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$8,459,962, as of the end of June. Expenditures stood at \$8,911,011, for a negative general fund balance of \$451,049. The county departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Controller - Monthly Report

Controller Smith updated that are getting the year-end-books closed out and their goal is to turn the general ledger and the books over to the auditors by October 17. She further stated that the finance department is kind of busy balancing accounts and reconciling accounts and making sure that everything on the books is accurate. This report was accepted as information.

Bamberg County Administrator - Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported that the county received a \$581,000 grant toward making improvements to the water tower between Bamberg and Denmark. That grant was for the tank only and now we have got to get water there and that will be able to have water provided to the airport. A power point was shown of the street and parking lot resurfacing work being performed at Denmark Technical College. A plan is being developed on how to get lighting throughout the campus by trying to obtain state funding for that project.

A meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, August 17th, to discuss the campus lighting. Administrator informed all that Senator John L. Scott, Jr. of Senate District 19, Richland County, passed away on Sunday, August 13th, and because of his dedication and with all the help he has provided for Bamberg County, we will recognize his service by acknowledging it with a resolution. Right-of-way documentation for Salty Road and Lazy Lane is still being pursued. Circle Road will be checked and considered for possible roadwork. This report was received as information.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council gave second reading to a proposed ordinance enlarging the boundaries of the Quad-County Industrial Park, Park II, and Park III between Bamberg County, South Carolina, Allendale County, South Carolina, Barnwell County, South Carolina and Hampton County, South Carolina to include

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property owned or operated by or to be owned or operated by Project Homegrown; and other matters related thereto.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved a resolution to amend the agreement for the establishment of the Jasper Ocean Terminal Multi-County Industrial/Business Park.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the calendar of events after adding the 1890 Program activities to calendar for September 22-23, 2023. An updated calendar will be sent to each member of council.

At this time Chairman Goodman called for public comments. Bamberg County resident Mabel Wright of 198 Circle Drive asked council for assistance on improving the condition of her road. She complained about no drainage on the road and when the road is graded the dirt is piled up and if it rains the mud gets stuck under her car. Also, she has an elderly mother and a sick husband and if EMS is needed it's difficult to get to them. Dr. Goodman thanked Ms. Wright for her comments and told her that they will take note of it and respond.

Chairman Goodman called for comments from council. During comments from council, all were thanked for their attendance, all were reminded about COVID-19 being on the rise as well as be careful in the heat and take precautions and condolences were extended to the Scott family.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Comer, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC